

Lake Maloney

2010 Survey Summary



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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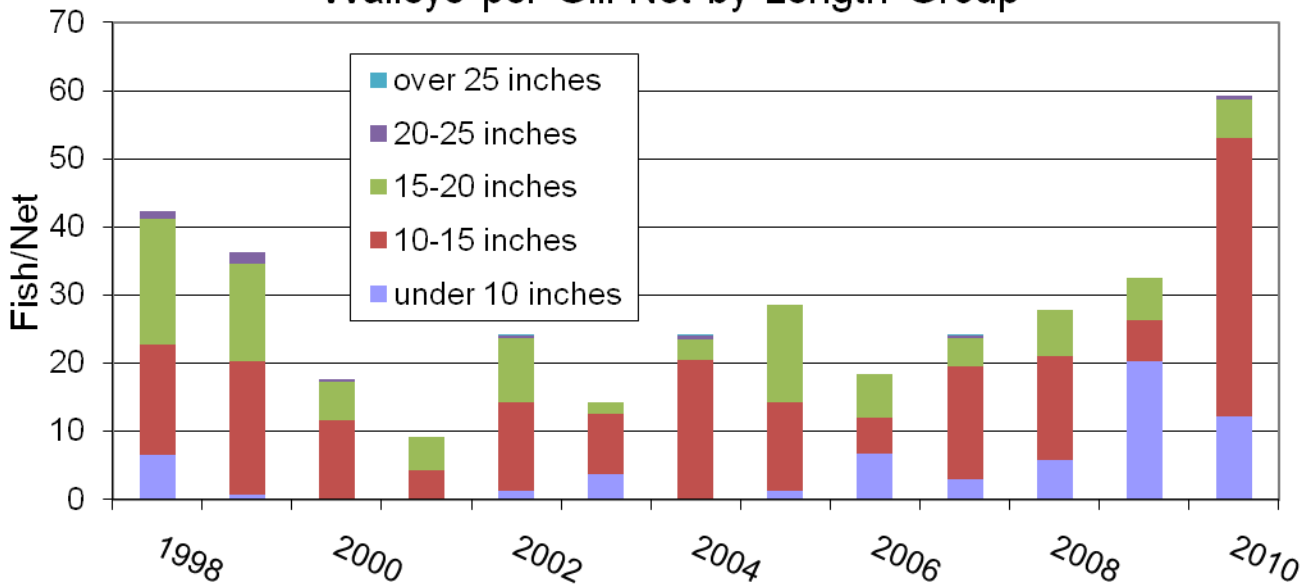
During the winter of 2009, Lake Maloney was dewatered to facilitate repairs to the dam structure. Nebraska Public Power District controls water levels at Lake Maloney as well as operation and maintenance of the dam. Maintenance was completed and the lake was refilled in the spring of 2010. The fishery was not adversely affected by the drawdown, due to movement of fish from upstream reservoirs.

Lake Maloney generally has high catch rates for walleye but large individuals are usually far and few between. The size structure for walleye in Maloney is normally composed of fish less than 15 inches and this continued to be the case in 2010. Catch rates were approximately 60 fish per net which was almost double the catch rates in 2009. White bass numbers have increased substantially in the last few years. Catch rates were approximately 36 fish per net but most of the fish were in the 10-15-inch range. Wipers have historically been an important part of the Maloney fishery, but most of these fish were harvested prematurely as “white bass”. Wipers were not intended to replace white bass, but rather to provide a trophy fish opportunity. Wiper numbers were down in 2009 and 2010, but half of the fish sampled were larger than 15 inches. We will continue to stock wipers but the rates will be lower and the frequency, less. However, white bass populations have come on strong and should provide an outstanding opportunity for both bank and boat anglers. Catfish numbers are good at Maloney and there are always a few Master Angler flathead catfish reported each year.

Walleye, wipers, and white bass are caught throughout the reservoir by drifting live bait, trolling crankbaits, or by vertical jigging. Good areas are flats that are located near deeper water, and near the outlet of the lake. The inlet area also provides excellent opportunities for those that prefer to fish from the bank. In the fall, look for gulls that are feeding on shad. If schools of baitfish are found, the predator fish are not far behind!

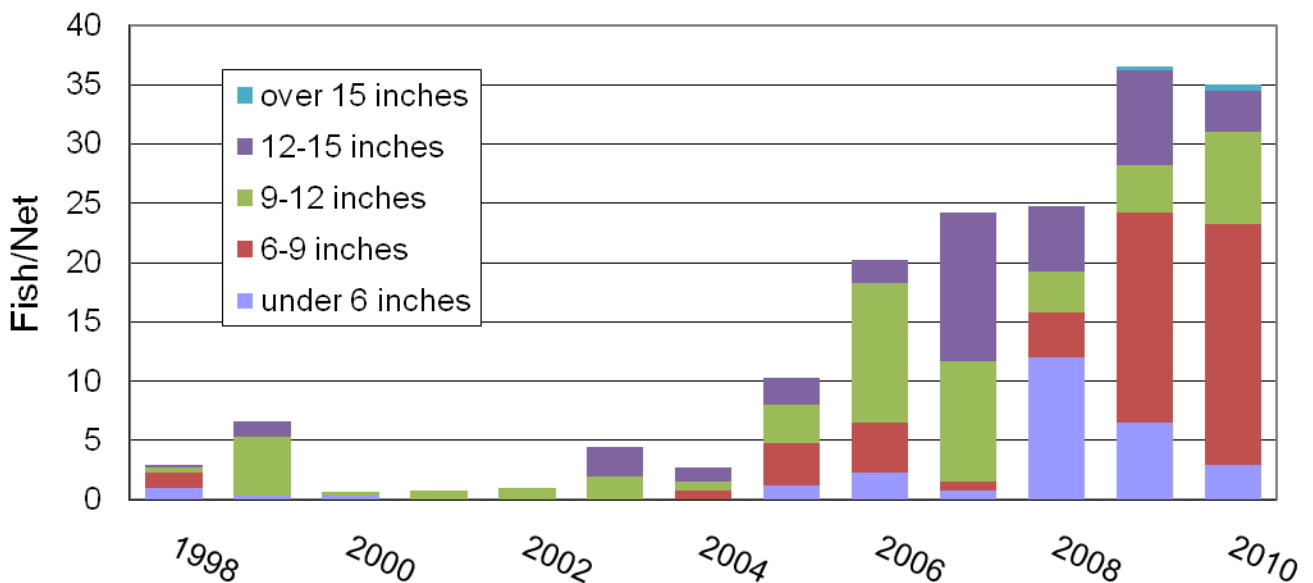
The following text and graphs are the results of gillnet surveys completed during the fall of 2010 at Lake Maloney. Fish populations are sampled each fall using gill nets, a method commonly used to sample fish found primarily in open water, such as walleye and wipers. For comparative purposes, graphs also show results from previous years. Graphs show the average number of fish caught per net and the relative abundance of fish within several length categories. The text provides a brief explanation of the information shown in the graphs. Also included are numbers of Master Angler fish awards issued for Maloney Reservoir.

Walleye per Gill Net by Length Group



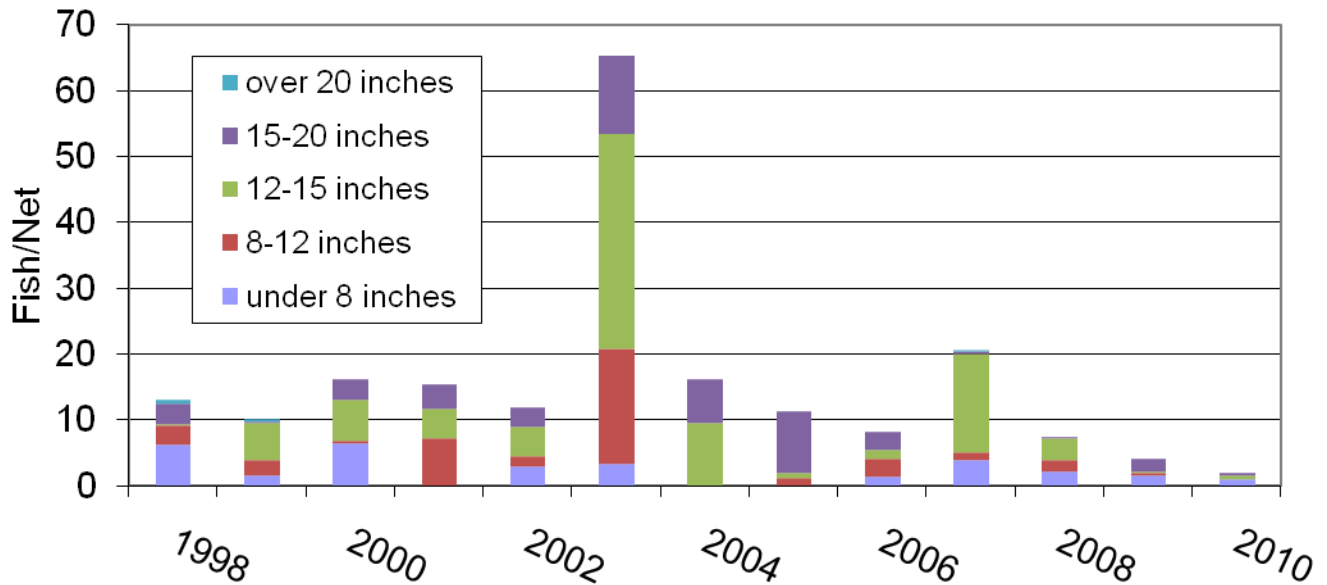
Walleye catch rates were approximately 60 fish per net in 2010. Lake Maloney is going to be one of the best opportunities to catch walleye in the Southwest District in 2011 assuming that those fish continue to grow and reach harvestable size. Even though numbers are high, larger size walleyes are lacking due to high angling pressure and harvest. That means that “keepers” are probably going to be a little hard to come by later in the year. Maloney is stocked with walleye fingerlings annually and will receive 40,000 fish in 2011.

White Bass per Gill Net by Length Group



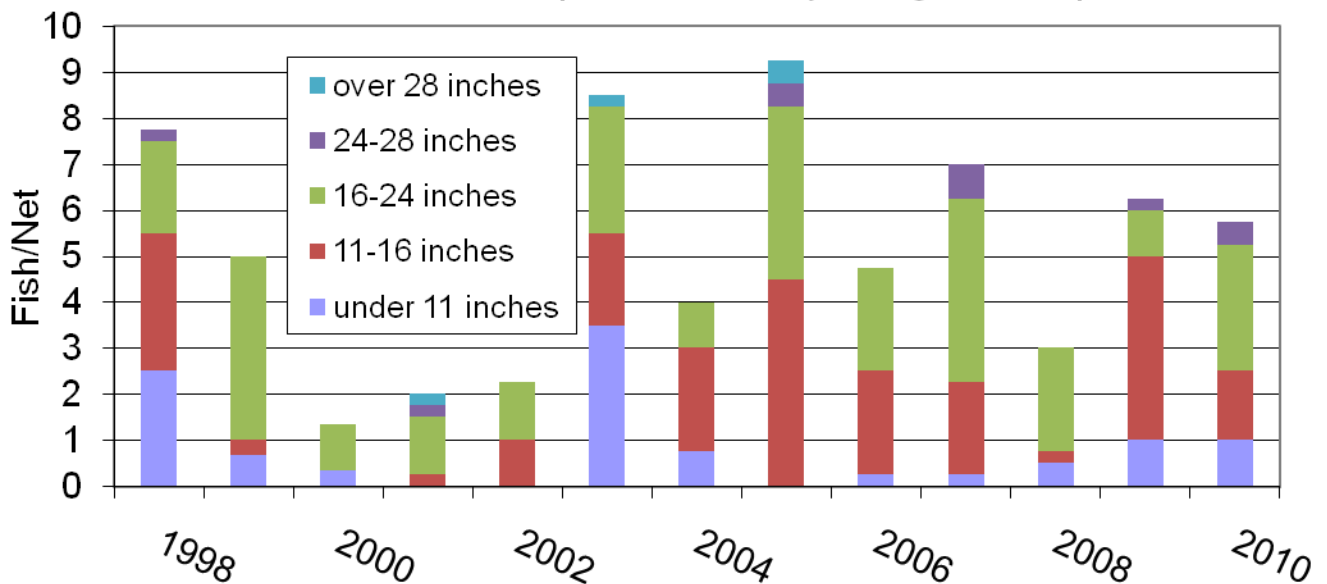
White bass catch at Maloney has been very high since 2006. The average was 25 fish per net in 2008 and has increased to 35 in 2009 and 2010. Most of the fish sampled were less than 9 inches but those fish should continue to grow and reach the 10-inch mark in one season. White bass are naturally recruiting, for the most part, in Lake Maloney. Therefore, white bass are only stocked intermittently.

Wiper per Gill Net by Length Group



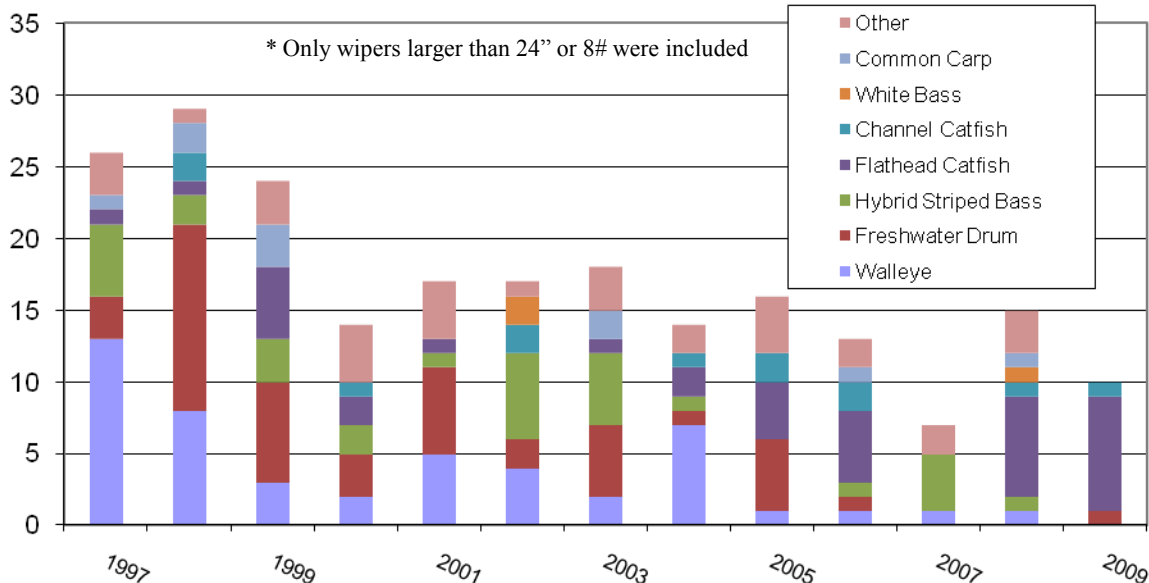
Wiper catch rates have generally hovered around the 10 fish per net at Maloney. We have recently decreased wiper stocking rates due to poor condition and premature harvest. Wipers are intended to provide a trophy opportunity for anglers. We have seen increased white bass numbers as a possible response to decreased wiper stocking, and will continue to monitor white bass numbers in order to provide a harvestable fish for anglers. Catch rates in 2010 averaged about 3 fish per net.

Channel Catfish per Gill Net by Length Group



Catch rate data for channel catfish in Maloney is somewhat variable although recruitment and size structure has been good. The catfish fishery in Maloney is strongly influenced by fish escape from Sutherland Reservoir. In 2008 we caught approximately 3 fish per net. Catch rates were just over 6 fish per net in 2009. Most fish sampled were 11-16 inches long.

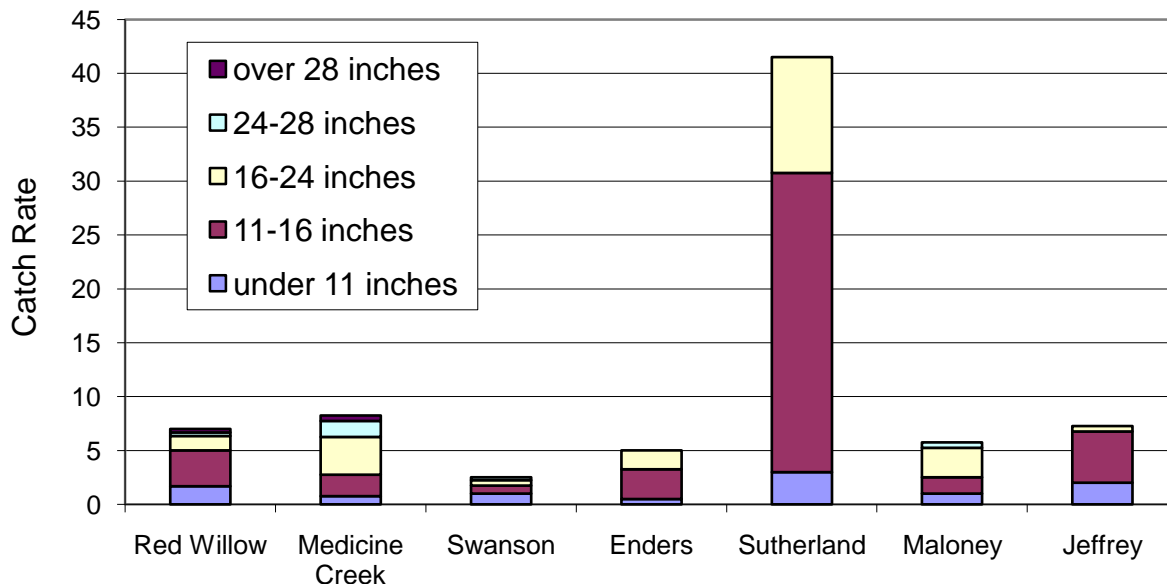
Master Angler Awards, Maloney Reservoir 1996-2009 (2010 data not yet available)



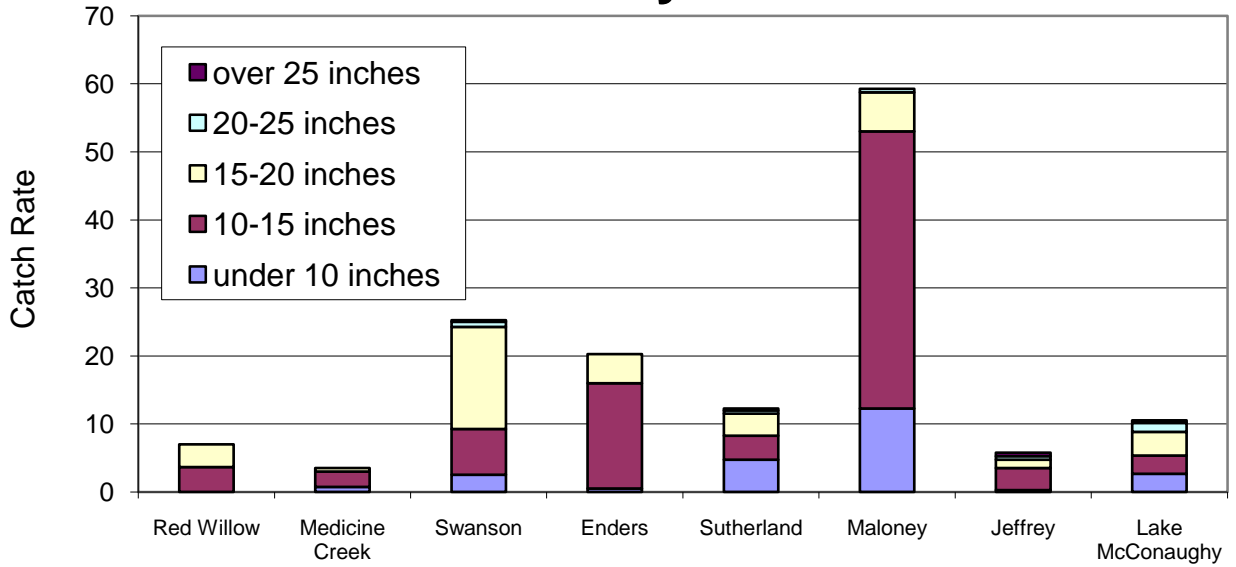
The numbers of Master Angler (M.A.) awards given may not necessarily represent the true number of large fish caught (but not reported), but this information can be useful for evaluating catch trends. Master angler awards reported have been fairly stable since 2000. In 2009 there was 1 channel catfish, 8 flathead catfish, and 1 freshwater drum reported.

The following graphs compare 2010 walleye, white bass, wiper and channel catfish gill net catch rates between Southwest District Reservoirs.

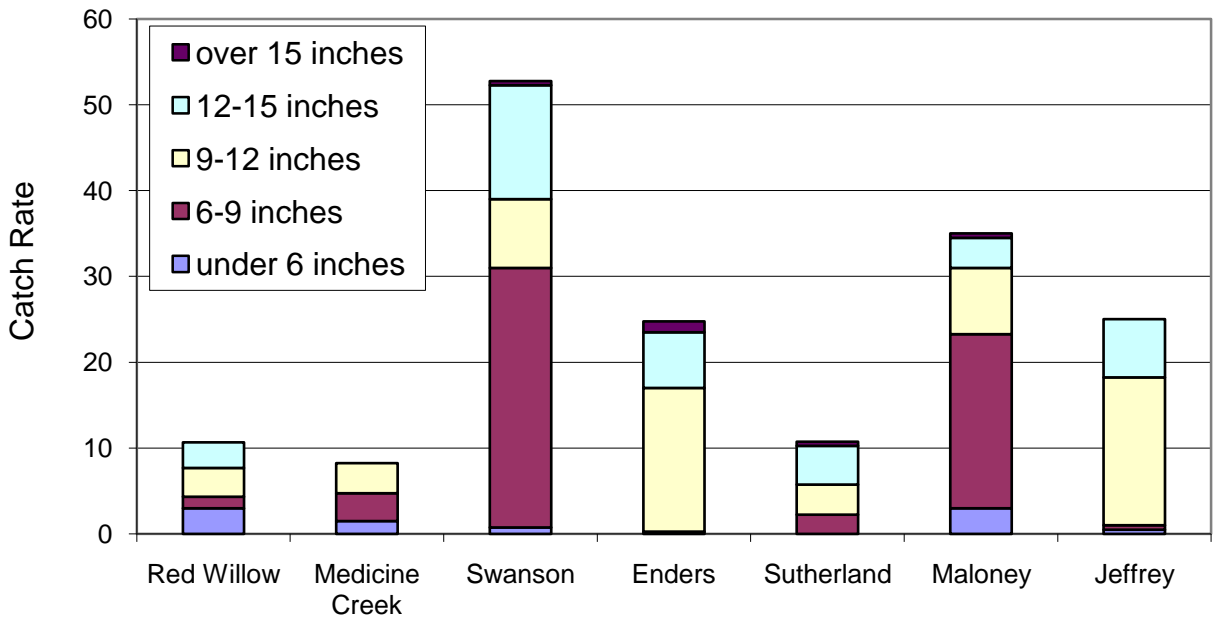
Channel Catfish



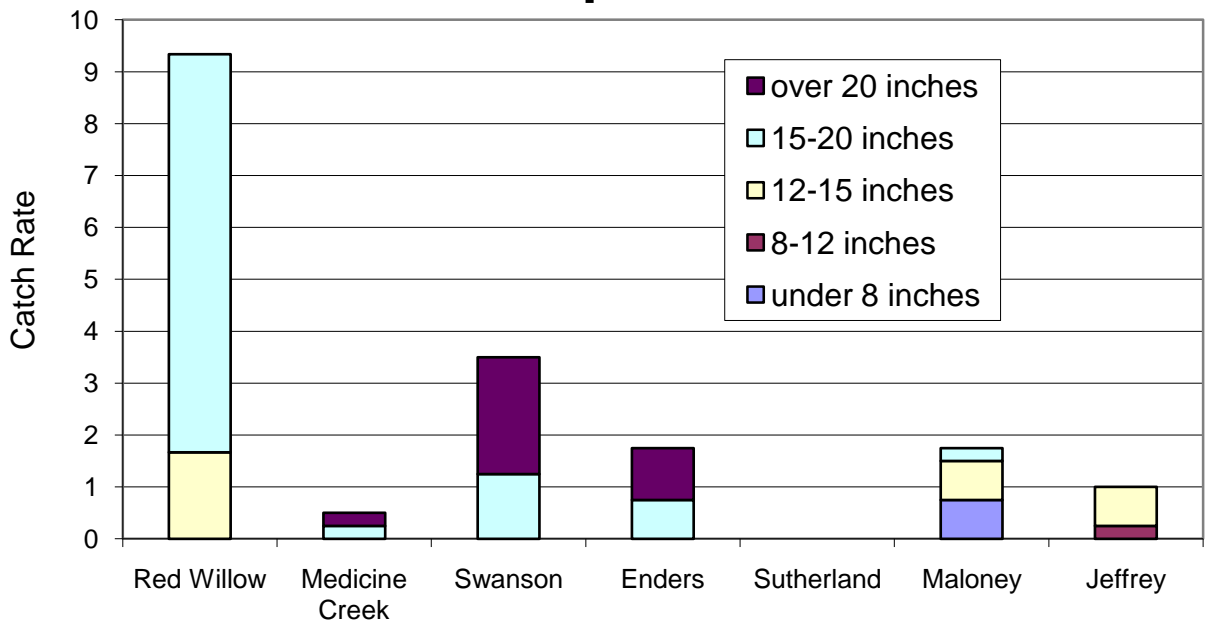
Walleye



White Bass



Wiper



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